

Tape log of interview with: Mr Ronald Read Date: 15/7/03

The Institution of Engineers, Australia
Sydney Engineering Heritage Committee
Oral History program

INTERVIEW TAPE LOG

Interviewee: Ronald Read
Interviewer: Margaret Torrens

Tape Numbers: MT6; MT7; MT8
Number of Tapes: 3

place of Interview: Penshurst N.S.W.

Date of Interview: 15/7/03

Restrictions on use: None

Log prepared using Panasonic RX ES 30 portable stereo system

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT 6, Side A Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
016	Family details including birth, place, parents and their occupations, paternal grandfather's details.	Read Hodgman Electrolytic Zinc Co.
074	Mother's (Katherine Hodgman) family details including arrival in Australia of each of her parents' families. Descendant of 2 nd Lt. William Gunn, who with his father fought in Bourbon Regiment 1815. Details of army career, then as law officer in Tasmania. Bushranger encounter. Family connection to suburb of Newstead.	Hodgman Gunn Ile de Bourbon Robert Campbell Gunn
172	Lineage to First Fleet. First white child born in colony. Discussion of family history research and historic connections through family marriages	Thomas Arndell Eliz. Burleigh James Gordon Gordon River
222	Sibling's birth details	Frances Read
225	Education details. The Friends school (co-ed). Reasons for attending. Curriculum. Family break-up.	Quakers

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT 6, Side A (cont.) Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
262	Attended Hobart High School in 1941 for Intermediate. Reasons for change. Conflicting guidance from parents for career.	
277	First job short-lived. Apprenticeship through mother's influence. Commenced night study for Diploma of Mechanical Engineering. Description of course and progress.	H.Jones & Co. (Hobart) Hobart Technical College
335	Description of duties as an apprentice. Wartime.	
353	Completed apprenticeship in 1947. Joined silkscreen printers in drawing office. Completed studies at end 1950.	Silk & Textile Printers (Hobart)
367	Interest in Scouting movement	
377	Interest in joining Air Force during WWII. Rejected because of job. H.Jones made food and munitions for war effort.	
387	First significant experience with pressure equipment (1944).	
397	Further experience as apprentice with pressure equipment.	
	End Side A Tape: IEA SYD: MT6	
	Tape: IEA SYD: MT6, Side B	
016	Commenced work in 1948 as draftsman at Electrolytic Zinc Co. where father had worked. Role and duties. Joined IEA.	Electrolytic Zinc Co.
075	Met future wife Muriel in 1950. Married 1951.	
098	Started as plant engineer in 1951 with Hydro- Electric Commission (Tas) despite no previous practical experience.	Hydro_Electric Commission Tarraleah
120	Variety of equipment used and maintained	
134	Hydro electric scheme described – dams and man made lakes.	Tunga Tinna Scheme
162	Safety measures minimal. Several rescues.	
179	Comparison to Snowy River Scheme.	
186	Role and responsibilities at Tarraleah and then Bronte Park. Staff supervision.	

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT 6, Side B (cont.) Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
209	Joined CMF and gained practical experience with explosives.	
227	Description of equipment, staff and construction work at Bronte Park. Repair of major pipeline 1954.	Tunga Tinna tunnel. Laughing Jack Lagoon
261	Description of accommodation.	
273	1954 offered position as head of section Hobart. Offer withdrawn - seniority issue.	
284	Applied for and accepted offer from ICI, Adelaide as salt field engineer, maintenance. Description of career advancement. Then Development Engineer at alkali plant at ICI Osborne. Description of site.	ICI (S.A.) I.E. Nicholson Osborne
321	ICI's development from 1935. Products. Reason for selection of saltfield site in Australia. Description of manufacture of salt in large tidal flats.	Spencers Gulf Salt manufacture
354	Vast increase in production – scientific details. Shipping problems. Customers.	
382	Became saltworks engineer (1956) and then Superintendent (1959). Description of operations at salt fields; harvests; climate; topology.	Solar saltfields
403	Description of operations at Osborne.	ICI at Osborne
	End Side B Tape: IEA SYD: MT6	
	Tape: IEA SYD: MT7, Side A	
014	Description (cont.) of operations and machinery in various workshops at Osborne site.	Boiler making Fitting Electrical
059	Machinery and materials “state of the art” for the times.	
075	Strong safety attitudes expressed by ICI. Appointed safety manager. Safety procedures, precautions, brochures, manuals, minimum standards, staff training and staff safety meetings discussed.	Safety attitude and procedures at ICI
158	Role as engineer and superintendent at solar saltfields. Description of harvesting and transporting salt. (continued next page)	

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT7, Side A (cont.) Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
	Role in development of continuous salt dissolving technique, which led to reduction by one third of employees, generally by natural attrition.	
213	Environmental issues not a concern . Description of waste disposal disregarding the environment.	Osborne Botany Bay
241	Sent to help redesign conveyor belt system at ICI fertilizer plant at Yarraville, Vic. (<i>At this point of the tape technological problems experienced</i>) .	Yarraville
280	Also sent to ICI's Botany Bay plant to sort out problems with "patchwork" repairs inappropriately carried out on boilers. Threats from Department of Labour and Industry. To act as liaison person between Department and ICI.	Boilers Botany Bay
288	Redesign at Yarraville. Reason for inadequate design of conveyor belts.	
	<i>At this point a replacement tape recorder is substituted for rest of recording</i>	
297	Had no experience in pressure vessels when appointed to Botany Bay. Reason for appointment.	
308	Quick learning programme in pressure vessels undertaken in Melbourne to cope with problems at Botany Bay. All responsibility but no authority over works managers made job difficult. Had to learn about all pressure equipment on site in short time.	
329	Discussion of how achieved success in convincing the Department to employ more realistic requirements and standards to allow for less frequent but more efficient and cost saving shutdowns for inspection of equipment. Improved operations, processes and techniques and online inspections by ICI staff caused less degradation. Eventually inspections every 3 years. Reputation gained with Department and works managers.	Safety inspections Shutdowns

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT7, Side A (cont.) Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
367	Was able to change attitudes and culture through perseverance and instruction through seminars using experts from within ICI.	staff training safety consciousness
387	Nominated to ICI's Liquified Gas and Containers Committee. Role and project.	poisonous gases
400	Interest developed in explosive expansion of tubes into tube plates. Description of use if this technique in various states.	explosive expansion of tubes technique
	End Side A Tape: IEA SYD: MT7	
	Tape: IEA SYD: MT7, Side B	
025	Plastic explosives and methods used in expansion of tubes. Example cited. Asked by Altona to help with project. Sole expert nationally in this method.	plastic explosives tube expansion Altona
110	Membership of many Standards Australia Committees (see biographical notes) and work involved with individual committees. Concurrent membership. Opportunity to change attitudes to safety procedures in the industry.	Standards Australia Committees
216	Statutory authorities, through fear of litigation, have now passed responsibility for inspections back onto owners of companies. Consequently no yardstick for competency of inspectors	Current responsibility for inspections
235	Responsible for writing and implementation of Standards of Australia code AS/NZS3788. Background history (1986 – 1990). World first as national standard.	Code AS/NZS 3788
269	Perceived problem when owners responsible for own inspections.	
277	Was able to cause significant changes and improvements at Botany Bay and introduce on site all safety standards identified by these various committees.	safety standards BotanyBay
311	Appointed Safety Manager (1982). Overseas experience and education in emergency treatment. Risk management improvements at ICI.	Texas A & M University

Counter	Tape: IEA SYD: MT7, Side B (cont.) Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
333	Awareness of problems in industry through membership and work on professional safety committees and training schemes.	Australian Institute of Petroleum Engineering Safety Committee Australian Liquefied Petroleum Gas Engineering Safety Committee
343	Instituted changes in safety awareness and culture through career.	
360	Reasons for retirement (1985). Consultancy work in fire protection, fire risk reduction, dangerous goods storage.	Clark Sanitarium
	End Side B Tape: IEA SYD: MT 7	
	Tape: IEA SYD: MT8, Side A	
033	Consulting with ICI. Remained on most of Standards Australia committees as ICI representative.	
073	Involved in writing pressure vessel section of document "National Standards for Plant" for Worksafe. Not adopted by State governments.	Worksafe standard
107	Satisfaction with changing attitudes towards safety at ICI. Safer standards produced at Standards Australia.	
122	Outside activities and interests discussed.	
	End Side A Tape: IEA SYD MT8	